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ABSTRACT

This packet contains three papers from a symposium on the future of human resource development. The first paper, "Should We Define the Profession of HRD? Views of Leading Scholars" (Wendy E. A. Ruona), explores whether human resource development (HRD) should be defined and why, which was one theme that emerged from a qualitative study of beliefs of leading HRD scholars. The second, "Strategic Roles of Human Resource Development in the New Millennium" (Richard A. Swanson) discusses the foundations of strategic intent for HRD, the schools of strategic thinking, the strategic roles for HRD, and their implications for strategic organizational planning. The final paper, "Shaping a Learning Vision: Life Histories of Learning Leaders and Facilitators" (Karen E. Watkins, Victoria J. Marsick, Linda Honold, and Judy O'Neil), draws on life history interviews with learning organization facilitators to identify transforming events that shaped the learning visions of these key change agents. Interviews with organization developers and senior managers of organizations working to make learning a central driver of innovation and change led to key lessons for facilitators and leaders of learning organizations. The papers contain reference sections. (KC)

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2000 AHRD Conference

Charting the Future of HRD

Symposium 8

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Should We Define the Profession of HRD? Views of Leading Scholars

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Much scholarly discussion has been devoted to definitional issues in HRD. This dialogue has primarily focused on competing definitions, while comparatively little has explored the issue of definition in and of itself. This paper explores whether HRD should be defined and why, which was one theme that emerged from a qualitative study of beliefs of leading HRD scholars.

Keywords: Defining HRD, Professionalization, Qualitative

In 1992 Chalofsky asserted that Human Resource Development (HRD) is "a field in search of itself". Is this true? HRD has made great strides in establishing itself in organizations and beginning to construct a knowledgebase to guide its practice, however it is also clear that much scholarly discussion during the last 10 years has been devoted to definitional or foundational issues such as the purpose of HRD. Recent literature reviews conducted by Ruona & Swanson (1998) and Weinberger (1998) uncovered 20+ different definitions of HRD. These definitions have been offered by some of HRD's top scholars. In one respect, these varied definitions are useful because they foster introspection about issues related to each definition such as the purpose of HRD, for whom HRD does its work, and HRD's primary activities. On the other hand, evident in these various definitions (and the debates that they instill) is also a fragmentation that some in the field fear could threaten HRD's contributions and, ultimately, its sustainability. The current state of the field would seem to find that these issues of definition unnecessarily dominate discussion and supports Chalofsky's 1992 assertion that HRD is "still looking for a unifying base to rally around" (p. 176).

However, the question remains— is HRD in search of itself? Are we looking for a unifying base around which to rally? Should we be? Thus far, the dialogue around definitions has primarily focused on competing definitions and debating which definition is more "right". Comparatively little dialogue has explored the issue of definition in and of itself and probed whether the profession should be bound in some way and how that might look. It could be that much of the debate around definitions is actually rooted in very different ideas about the act of defining/bounding the field. Uncovering some of these deeply held assumptions may help HRD to be more clear about its future development.

Purpose

In a recent study exploring beliefs underlying HRD through the views of scholarly leaders in the field (Ruona, 1999), there was much discussion about this topic— whether HRD should strive for definition, why or why not, and what it might look like if the field pursues increased definition and bounding. The purpose of this paper is to share one theme that emerged from the analysis of that larger study.

To provide some background, the purpose of the overall study was to explore beliefs underlying the profession of HRD. In order to do this, the inquiry explored assumptions and beliefs of scholarly leaders in the field. Specific objectives of that study were to:

1. Explore core beliefs that are underlying participant's ideas of excellencies to be produced by the profession;
2. Analyze the findings to identify common and divergent beliefs across participants of this study.

The findings presented, once again, represent only one part of the study's findings which were quite extensive. The focus of what will be reported is limited to the issue of defining and bounding the field which was a naturally emerging theme from that qualitative data.

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Methodology

This was a descriptive study, using qualitative methods. Initial in-depth, face-to-face, interviews were conducted with 9 of the 10 participants, and one was a phone interview. Each participant was provided with a worksheet to prompt their thinking which simply stated the following organizing question: "If the profession of HRD was excellent in all ways, what 5-7 things would be true?" Participants were directed to use this question as a springboard to spur conversation during the interviews and were instructed that the focus of the interview would not be on their list of excellencies, but rather on the assumptions and beliefs driving those ideas of excellencies. These initial interviews were unstructured rather than imposing too much structure that may have impeded discussion of the topics raised by the participants.

All interviews were approximately two hours long and were audio-taped. Interviews were transcribed professionally, and were carefully verified by the researcher. In addition, member checks (Guba & Lincoln, 1989) were conducted with each of the 10 participants to ensure accurate interpretation and to discuss follow-up questions. These were tape-recorded phone conversations that were then partially transcribed by the researcher.

Sample

Qualitative inquiry focuses on in-depth, small, information-rich cases selected purposefully. It was estimated that members of the scholarly community might be well-suited for participation in this study because of (a) their intense and scholarly interest in HRD and (b) the likelihood that this would be a pool of people who are quite familiar with a diverse range of issues facing the field, and have done some serious thinking on issues related to HRD. All participants were then chosen on the basis that they have served a leadership role in a scholarly association related to HRD. That is, each participant has been either: (a) an incoming, current, or past president of the Academy of Human Resource Development (AHRD), or (b) a current or past chair of the American Society for Training and Development's (ASTD) Research Committee. This sampling criteria was chosen because (a) these two associations represent the two primary scholarly associations of the field, (b) leaders of these associations are elected by their membership, (c) these are active scholars who have made marked contributions to the field of HRD. The current and previous four leaders from each of the associations were solicited for this study, and are listed in Table 1. All participants solicited agreed to participate in the study, and agreed for their names to be published. However, quotes/excerpts are *not* accompanied with a name, and information that might make it possible to identify the participant has been edited out of any published documents.

Table 1. Scholarly Leaders Participating in the Study.

AHRD Presidents	ASTD Research Committee Chairs
Gary N. McLean (president-elect)	Victoria J. Marsick (1997-current)
Elwood F. Holton (1998-2000)	Darlene Russ-Eft (1994-1996)
Richard A. Swanson (1996-1998)	Ronald L. Jacobs (1991-1993)
Karen E. Watkins (1994-1996)	Timothy Baldwin (1991)
R. Wayne Pace (1993-1994)	Neal Chalofsky (1989-1990)

Analysis

Qualitative data analysis demands inductive reasoning with the purpose of searching for important meanings and patterns in what the researcher has heard and seen. The process used to analyze the data for this paper was based on the constant comparative method (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994) and generic coding procedures. An overview of the process, which was more recursive that can be described here, is summarized in Table 2.

Findings: Defining and Bounding the HRD Profession

The goal of this section is to provide a creative, descriptive, and interpretive account for this theme entitled "Defining and Bounding the HRD Profession". The focus is on reporting the sub-themes that emerged, with a heavy emphasis on hearing the voices of the participants of the study through excerpted quotes from the interview

transcripts. Excerpts from actual interviews are separated from the text and are bulleted by a double-quote (❞) and italicized. For example:

> ❞ *This is the format of a quote that is excerpted directly from the text of a participant's interview. It is indented, bulleted by a double-quote mark, and italicized.*

Table 2. Overview of Data Analysis.

Phase I	1. Transcripts read and meaningful segments of the text highlighted and segmented. 2. Interview text formatted for sorting and coding (described below). 3. Three interviews analyzed in-depth. 4. First coding scheme developed and applied to first three interviews. 5. Peer Review #1.
Phase II	6. Remaining seven interviews coded. Coding scheme evolved, and interviews re-coded as needed. 7. Summary sheets created and sent to all participants with their transcript. 8. Follow-up interviews conducted.
Phase III	9. Database created to facilitate further analysis. 10. Two rounds of analysis and re-coding. 11. Peer Review #2. 12. Coding scheme finalized. 13. All codes with supporting data printed to facilitate reporting of outcomes.

The final part of this section then provides an analysis of this theme.

Who Needs a Definition of HRD?

A powerful theme that emerged during this study came from one participant in particular who passionately argued against a definition for the profession:

> ❞ *Who needs a definition? Our field is strengthened by having different schools of thought and by its diversity. I firmly believe that. I am equally as strong about saying that I'm not right because I'm here and you're not wrong because you're there. We're different. We're going to work with different organizations, we're going to work for different objectives with different goals. Fine. I don't need to control your definition and I'm certainly not going to let you control mine.*

Diversity of the field and the people in it were central values for this person, who also argued against positions that are too normative and that tend to lowlight the unique qualities that people contribute to the world:

> ❞ *It's always appropriate to have an opening definition— open for conversation and exploration and differences of opinion. Nothing wrong with defining. What get's wrong, from my point of view, is when you say that I have the right definition. That's when I'm going to resist. ... I am a person who applauds and celebrates ambiguity. I am distressed by the drive to have to find "the" answer. The normative perspective that you see in some areas of HRD drives me nuts just as I'm sure my willingness and openness to ambiguity has to drive other people nuts.*

The drive to define was not an issue for this participant who went on to explain that they define HRD as a community of individuals who consciously and continuously choose to be a part of the HRD community:

> ❞ *It's only a problem if you are driven by trying to define your field and your expertise. I don't feel a need to do that. I don't think it's appropriate to do that. You know, I'm perfectly OK with letting you define it any way you want to define it. If*

you're comfortable being in there with me then you're in the right place. If you aren't, then you're in the wrong place or I'm in the wrong place, so we need to figure that out. I think those individual decisions is what makes community. For me they are all one of the same system, so individuals are community when they come together.

One of the basic premises of this person's view was that the complex nature of systems and the real work that gets done in the world simply cannot be so clearly and statically defined:

> *It's driven by the artifacts of organizational life that require us to define disciplines. This whole thing about disciplines emerging and maturing and going through stages and so on, I think it's all baloney. It's not baloney in the sense of how life is actually lived. I think it's an accurate description. But I don't think it's the way it has to be. Why do we have disciplines? Why don't we see life as a holistic complex of perspectives, values, theories, constructs coming together?*

> *Is expertise needed in an organization? Yes, absolutely. Does that mean that we then segment our lives so that all of our life becomes this small, narrow, itty-bitty piece? This organization I was working in, the focus of the consulting is restructuring of the staffing of this office, and they have traditionally been organized in silos. When I did my interviews everyone was frustrated with that because they saw that that's not the world they live in. They have expertise there, but the world is much more complex than a silo.*
>
> *And so if you see everything from a functional perspective you don't ever really address the important complex questions. The complex questions require multiple skills, they require multiple expertise, they require a view of the total organization as a system— you don't get that from a functional perspective. We're so pushed in our culture to get the right answer that we're not allowed to be creative, we're not allowed to live with ambiguity, we're not allowed to let things happen as they happen. We've got to have the answer. Well, that's not the world I live in. People have to work in the context in which they find themselves.*

> *That assumes a static world with static individuals. I can give you a definition now and you can come back to me in 2 hours and whatever has happened to me in 2 hours I might have twisted it and changed it, I might have raised questions about it.*

Part of that complexity, too, is something that this person argued the western mindset does not naturally acknowledge and effectively deal with:

> *I think it's driven by the western ethno-centric mindset of having to put things in boxes. I don't like that. It makes no sense to me. It's a continuum. But we don't like to think in terms of continuums in this country, and I think that's what drives us around defining our discipline, defining our competencies, credentialing, etc...*

Another participant also raised some concern about the complacency that can set into a field when there is a lack of diversity:

> *If you read, for example, Thomas Kuhn's work and think about what he'd call normal science where the field has a general agreed upon paradigm and most of what goes on with that is incremental kinds of research and so forth and that there's actually a complacency that sets in when you reach that, if you ever reach it. And I'm not sure you ever do. In fact, I wonder if we ever should. Because then you also become insular. I'm not sure that it's a bad thing, in a research community in particular, that there are competing paradigms. I mean take psychology. Have they ever settled the behaviorism versus cognitivism debate?*

Finally, a participant also raised the issue of the diversity of roles inherent in the field and wondered whether the roles in and of themselves necessitated minimal definition:

> *I think another issue is that there's a certain assumption that seems to come through that HRD is a unified field. I see huge differences between my colleagues who see themselves primarily as training experts and those who see themselves primarily as OD experts and those who see themselves as CD experts. There are vastly different values driving those functional components of HRD.*

Define What HRD is and What it is Not

There were strong voices advocating for some explicit definition of the profession of HRD. A few participants explicitly called for it:

> *In strategy you define yourself partly by what you are and what you aren't. And it is decisions when you say "we're not going to do that" that as much define your strategy as what you do decide. I think some of that logic carries over to defining an academic discipline. If you're everything, you're nothing. What are the streams of research? What are the domains of interest we study? How, then, can we distinguish ourselves from other kinds of things? I think that's important. You need some identity, and I think the struggle to do that in HRD constrains us some.*

> *I believe it goes back to our core beliefs as to what we do and don't do. You know, it all cascades. And if we don't do it, and it becomes an important issue, somebody else is going to run with it. And that's been the history of our field because we haven't had core beliefs and core processes... we haven't had a deep understanding of what we do and don't do and what we promise and don't promise, and then evidence of delivering on what we promise.*

> *And if we evolved a clearer fundamental perspective and a narrower view, although the view may be a broad view, but a view that is definable that people can recognize and understand... this would lead us more closely to becoming a profession.*

Many more voices surfaced as participants discussed benefits of defining the profession. Specifically, a few key ideas could be identified. The first came from one person who passionately reflected on the ethics involved with HRD needing to define what it does and then deliver on that:

> *...well, I use the word integrity... but if we had any integrity at all then our core beliefs are an expression of that integrity. And if we don't have theories, tools, methodologies, and processes that in fact deliver on our core beliefs, then we have no integrity. So we get ourselves totally disconnected from our core beliefs... Some people want to argue about what we're in the business for— we're in the business of learning, we're in the business of performance improvement... I don't care! But if you say you're in the business of learning, show me that that happens at the end. And so if you haven't made that clear that this is your purpose or core beliefs, or value or mission, then you can get distracted very easily. The HRD profession would be excellent if it delivered on its promise.*

Another person echoed the above sentiment in explaining that a definition of HRD is simply that which HRD says it is credible for:

> *...that's the definition of Human Resource Development— what is it that you're credible for. If you're a credible attorney, that means that you know certain kinds of things. If I come to you, I should be able to get, no matter you practice law, I would get the same answer. Now that isn't absolutely true, but it makes it clear enough...*

A second powerful idea emerged when more than a few participants shared a particular reason why they felt so strongly that the field should define itself. In their view, if HRD doesnt define itself, the organizations that HRD professionals work in will.

> *In a way we not only define ourselves as a group, as a profession, but our individual practice is also defined by the organizations we reside in. And, so if I reside in X organization and they say this is what HRD is going to be I'll still practice HRD. If I was an accountant or a social worker or a counselor or a therapist and I worked in an organization... well, you can't tell me I have to act or practice my profession a certain way unless, of course, it's unethical. Because I have certain standards and beliefs around which, you know, you don't fudge numbers if you're an accountant just because the organization wants you to. You don't reveal confidentiality if you're a therapist just because your organization wants you to, or tell people they have to operate in a certain way, counsel people to operate in a certain way...*
>
> *Those professions are based on a given set of beliefs and standards around the profession, not around the organization in which they operate. But we don't have that grounding. So we walk into an organization and they say "do this" and we don't have anything to pull back on. What if we were able to develop and articulate and ground ourselves with a set of beliefs and values around who we should be, irrespective of what organization we work for and be a truly independent profession that stands on it's own values, not on the organizational context in which we work? That to me is a radical view!*

> *The reality is that employer's control entry into our profession and they don't know anything about HRD!*

> *People in HRD, because they've come often with no training whatsoever in HRD and there's kind of a feeling in the organization that it can be this or that... it's not as strong as it used to be, but it's still enough out there that the notion that some kind of strong ethical foundation should drive your practice is wholly lacking.*

Third, and related to not wanting the organization or context to define HRD, some people talked about how individual definitions of HRD should not be more highly valued than some type of definition that may be more representative of the community of HRD.

> *And hence if you said that you're doing Human Resource Development, that's what you're doing. If you say you don't feel that you are, then you're not, even though from my point of view you may be doing that. And I think that's what's hurting us.*

> *So it's part of that whole idea of leaving things down at the individual-level. I think that's one of the beliefs that most people in the profession have— that individuals have the freedom and ability to decide for themselves what they want to do, when they should do it, how, dah, dah, dah. The minute you're making some decisions as a sub-system of this larger organization, it seems to me you have a different responsibility at that point. And so how you choose what's in and what's out is really important. And if you don't have tools and theories to make those decisions, it seems to me you're just going to be drug around or you're going to end up having some childlike notions that you're responsive to everything, while the reality is that you can only be responsive to a limited number of things. So you feel an enormous burden and, in fact, you're getting no where. And we have a lot of people in our field that are like that, really burdened by it. They're goodness and the goodness of the profession, are really doing very little to help the people, let alone the organization. I think those are just two different things— core beliefs of the profession versus core beliefs for the individual.*

- *And some people say "I have my own personal set of beliefs" and I believe many do. But many of those people have developed them over time, number one. Number two, they can afford to have them. That's a reality! I mean some have this reputation and a long history of experience that allows them to say "if I don't want to work with you, I won't". Some others of us who've got to put bread and butter on the table may not be able to afford to say that. You know, the starving... there's not a lot of starving artists among us that'll stand up if we've got to feed our families or ourselves. But if we had a set of beliefs, we could at least again start to move—stand on those and depart from them, but at least we're departing from something that is solid ground. It's not the quick sand that we stand on now.*

- *There are a lot of behavioral psychologists around. That doesn't make them right, that's just because they're there. They see that as a way of managing a situation and I say that's fine. It's not what should represent the profession, put it that way. It certainly might be an element of it, a part of it, but shouldn't be the driving force*

Embedded in the above quotes is also a premise that was articulated by some participants a little later in their interviews— that is, that HRD is, or should be, a community with some things in common.

- *The creation of the Academy of Human Resource Development, for instance, implies that there is a kind of a professional definition that can be associated with that group, otherwise why would we need to have such a group. It seems that if it's necessary for people to get together to achieve these objectives and to get organized that the implication is that it is possible to conceive of this as a kind of professional area.*

Those participants who advocated not wanting individual definitions to dominate also offered their conception of the role of individual beliefs in terms of the profession's development:

- *I don't think an individual can raise their core beliefs above the workgroup. Now they can use their core beliefs to change the profession or change their workgroup. That makes perfect sense. But to think that you should have ten different people in a department with a set of totally inconsistent and incoherent beliefs and functioning day to day, I think is insane. So I think that if you can't find some higher level core beliefs that are widely held and articulated you're either compelled to mute yourself a bit, or to do the work. But they have to lead the profession at that point. It's not held quietly inside. I think that most individual core beliefs are held personally, deeply, and quietly and that's different from being public and publicly-owned. The journey is getting that to happen. That's work in itself. Either we have the scholarly role in leading that, or we have practitioners that are in highly responsible positions that are leading.*

- *I think it should be educational. People should learn from these little debates and discussions and evolve a point of view that could be defined, described, and that would constitute something that would be acceptable among those people who are the major movers in the field. And if you're peripheral, if you're marginal, then that question should not control the discourse in the field. But I think if somebody has a point of view they should express it and that the field would be better for it if we can evolve a perspective, a point of view that is justifiable, then it would lead us closer to become a profession.*

Finally, various participants of the study offered a variety of other benefits that they believed would result from defining the field. Due to space restrictions, these will only be presented during the symposium presentation or are available from the author directly.

Analysis of Findings

In the findings presented above, two themes were presented that described compelling arguments for and against defining the HRD profession. It is interesting to note two underlying premises of these arguments. First, those who argued for bounding the field seemed to be more focused on the external demands of the world. Their justification was largely grounded in recognizing external realities such as what seems necessary to become a credible profession and not letting organizations define the profession. The participant who rejects defining the profession also rejects this reasoning. Rather that person argued that needing to define is an artifact of the external world and that bounding things in this way is simply not reflective of how the world is and how real work gets done out there.

Second, one can also see in this data that those who advocated definition view HRD as a community and are concerned with that community acting in concert. A few participants, for instance, talked about how individual perspectives of the profession should not be more highly valued than those of the community. The participant who argued against defining, on the other hand, views community fundamentally differently as a process of individuals self-selecting into something that is close enough to their perspectives/values. This person also celebrated the diversity inherent in a community, whereas those who argued for definition struggled with this fine line between individual and profession.

These two differences are central in truly understanding people's perspectives on this and many other issues central to the evolution of the profession. Part of the purpose of this paper has been to share each "side" of this argument a little more fully than what has been available in the past and to understand the assumptions that drive the argument that most are able to hear. In addition, it is so important to mention that these arguments are much more rich and full than can be adequately presented here. Most notable is that due to severe space restrictions it is impossible to share key themes that emerged from those participants who advocated defining the field and then offered specific possibilities of what that might look like. These themes are briefly introduced in Table 3 and warrant a future paper.

Table 3. What Defining/Bounding the Field Could Look Like: Views of Leading Scholars.

Theme	Brief Description of the Theme
Embracing the whole	Participants describe their desire to define some type of boundary that is more inclusive of the diversity in the field, while also struggling with the inherent costs of excluding important HRD areas.
Foster multiple rivals	Rival definitions of the field are encouraged even as participants wonder what that might look like, how a field holds multiple definitions/missions as important, and how rival definitions should be judged.
Mange the tension	Participants who advocated defining the profession also talked about the challenge of 1) managing the tension between extremes that are necessary for progress and 2) pushing the boundaries of that definition to guard against stagnancy.
Potential Bounds	Participants offered multiple ways that the profession could be defined. Sub-themes included potential bounds such as: 1) Philosophy (mission, values, epistemologies, etc…), 2) Ethics (codes of ethics and standards of practice), and 3) Foundational theory and knowledgebase.

Contribution to New Knowledge in HRD

HRD is at a critical stage— growing from its early development to a more mature stage where it has the potential to make great contributions to organizations and the humans that work in them. Most people that come to HRD are drawn by their desire to help individuals and organizations in some way. It is that same motivation that draws scholars into thinking about the profession itself and that is the impetus for this study. Growth of the HRD profession should be a conscious process. Part of growing *well* is reflecting on HRD's evolution— where the field has been, where its going, and where it needs to go to optimize its impact.

This study provided a unique opportunity to listen-in on the conversations of leading scholars in the field about what they feel is important around this issue of bounding and clarifying the field— through results that have been systematically gathered and analyzed using rigorous qualitative methods. It is hoped that this will provide some

new perspective and insight into the issue as well as provide ample opportunity for personal reflection about your own role in the growth of the profession.

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Strategic Roles of Human Resource Development in the New Millennium

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This paper discusses the foundations of strategic intent for Human Resource Development (HRD), the schools of strategic thinking, the strategic roles for HRD, and their implications for strategic organizational planning.

Keywords: HRD, Strategic Roles of HRD, Foundations of HRD

Problem Statement

The human resource development (HRD) profession has had a continuing fascination with means versus ends. The indicators of this are clear: HRD interventions focus on process techniques versus appropriateness to goal attainment (Swanson, 1996) and studies show that evaluation practices focus almost exclusively on individual perceptions versus actual knowledge and performance change (Bassi, L. & Cheney, S., 1996). When the profession does speak of strategy, the most it can typically see is the alignment of HRD activities with organizational strategy (Rothwell & Kazanas, 1989).

The problem facing the HRD profession is the need to develop a mature picture of itself. The resulting question, "What is the strategic role of HRD?" and the development of a theoretically sound and internally consistent response is the focus of this paper including sections on the foundations of strategic intent for HRD, schools of strategic thinking, and strategic thinking in HRD.

The Foundations of Strategic Intent for HRD

Organizational strategy is concerned with the match between the internal capabilities of the organization and its external environment (Kay, 1999). For human resource development (HRD) to contribute to organizational strategy, it must first create a clear picture of itself. The HRD foundations that contribute to strategic intent include: defining HRD, articulating core HRD beliefs, viewing HRD as a process within a larger system, and articulating the theoretical foundations of HRD. While there is no one right response to these foundational questions, having a thoughtful response with internal consistency among its components is believed to be crucial. The following is one thoughtful and responsible response as to the foundations of HRD.

Definition of HRD

HRD is a process of developing and unleashing human expertise through organization development (OD) and personnel training and development (T&D) for the purpose of improving performance.

- The domains of performance include the organization, work process, and group/individual levels.
- OD is the process of systematically implementing organizational change for the purpose of improving performance.
- T&D is the process of systematically developing expertise in individuals for the purpose of improving performance.
- The three critical related areas of HRD include human resource management, career development, and quality improvement.

Core HRD Beliefs

1. Organizations are human-made entities that rely on human expertise in order to establish and achieve their goals.

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2. Human expertise is developed and maximized through HRD processes and should be done for the mutual long-term and/or short-term benefits of the sponsoring organization and the individuals involved.
3. HRD professionals are advocates of individual/group, work process, and organizational integrity.

The HRD Process Within the Larger System

HRD is a process or system within the larger organizational and environmental system. As such, it has the potential of harmonizing, supporting and/or shaping the larger systems of which it is a part.

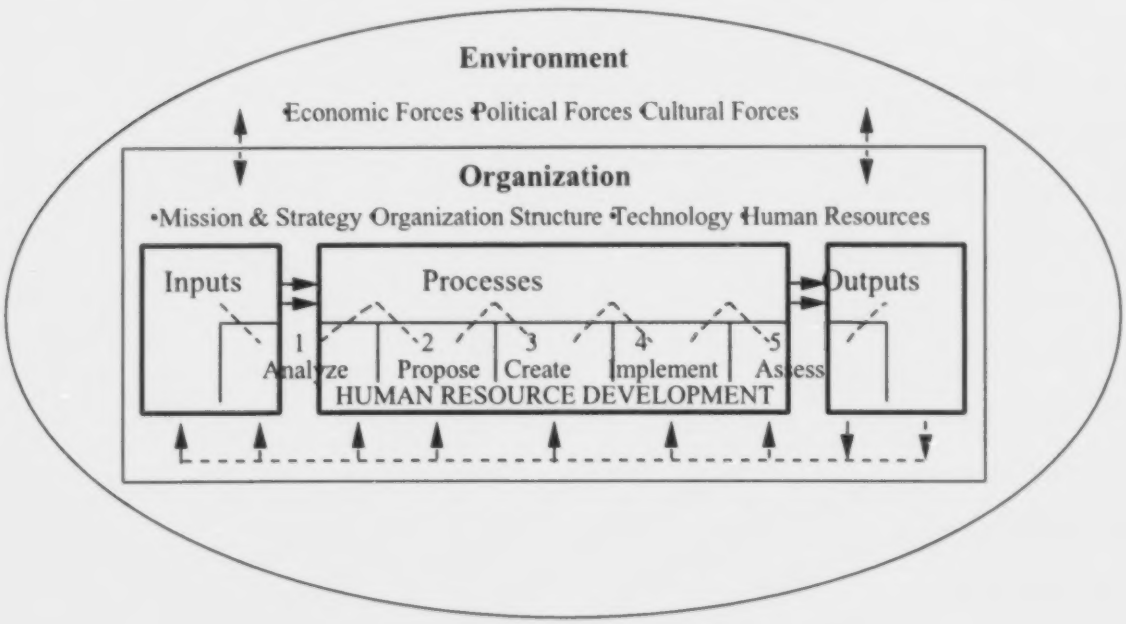


Figure 1 Swanson, 1996, p. 251

Theoretical Foundation of HRD

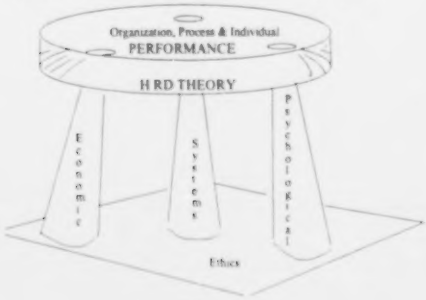
The discipline of HRD, in order to understand, explain, and carry out its process and roles, relies on three core theories. They include: (1) psychological theory, (2) economic theory, and (3) systems theory.

- *Psychological theory captures the core human aspects of developing human resources as well as the socio-technical interplay of humans and systems.*
- *Economic theory captures the core issues of the efficient and effective utilization of resources to meet productive goals in a competitive environment.*
- *Systems theory captures the complex and dynamic interactions of environments, organizations, work process, and group/individual variables operating at any point in time and over time.*

The three component HRD theories and their integration are visually portrayed as a 3-legged stool. The legs represent the component theories, and the stool's platform represents the full integration of the three theories into the unique theory of HRD. While the stool rests firmly on the floor or the host organization, an ethical rug serves as a filter through which the integrity of both HRD and the host organization can be maintained.

The systems view of organizations, HRD as a process within the organization, and the organization function within the larger environment provides the big-picture framework with which to begin thinking about the strategic roles of HRD (Swanson, 1996, p. 251).

Figure 2 The Theoretical Foundations of Human Resource Development



Schools of Strategic Thinking

Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, and Lampel (1999) have summarized ten schools of strategic thinking. They argue that having a wider picture allows managers, consultants, and academics to better understand and pursue strategy. The schools are summarized through comparison of their features including: sources, base discipline, champions, intended messages, realized messages, school category, and an associated homily.

1. Design School

•Sources	P. Selznick
•Base discipline	None (architecture as a metaphor)
•Champions	Case study teachers (e.g. Harvard) leadership aficionados-especially in the USA
•Intended messages	Fit
•Realized messages	Think (strategy making as case study)
•School category	Prescriptive
•Associated homily	*"Look before you leap."*

2. Planning School

•Sources	H. I. Ansoff
•Base discipline	Some links to urban planning, systems theory, & cybernetics
•Champions	Professional managers, MBAs, staff experts, consultants & government controllers
•Intended messages	Formalize
•Realized messages	Program (rather than formulate)
•School category	Prescriptive
•Associated homily	*"A stitch in time save nine."*

3. Positioning School

•Sources	Purdue University work (D. Schendell & K. Hatten) then notably M. E. Porter
•Base discipline	Economics (industrial organization) and military history.
•Champions	Analytical staff types, consultants, and military writers.
•Intended messages	Analyze
•Realized messages	Calculate (rather than create or commit)
•School category	Prescriptive
•Associated homily	*"Nothing but the facts, ma'am."*

4. Entrepreneurial School

•Sources	J. A. Schumpeter, A. H. Cole, & others in economics
•Base discipline	None (although early writings came from economics)
•Champions	Popular business press, individuals, small business people everywhere
•Intended messages	Envision
•Realized messages	Centralize (then hope)
•School category	Descriptive (some prescriptive)
•Associated homily	*"Take us to your leader."*

5. Cognitive School

•Sources	H. A. Simon & J. G. March
•Base discipline	Psychology (cognitive)
• Champions	Those with a psychological bent- pessimists in one wing and optimists in the other
•Intended messages	Cope or create
•Realized messages	Worry (being unable to cope in either case)
•School category	Descriptive

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- •Associated homily *"I'll see it when I believe it."*

6. Learning School
- •Sources G. Lindboim, R. Cyert & J. March, K. Weick, J. Quinn, & C. Prahalad & G. Hamel
- •Base discipline None (perhaps links to learning theory in psychology & education; chaos theory).
- •Champions People inclined to experimentation, ambiguity, & adaptability.
- •Intended messages Learn
- •Realized messages Play rather than pursue
- •School category Descriptive
- •Associated homily *"If at first you don't succeed, try, try again."*

7. Power School
- •Sources G. Allison (micro), J. Pfeffer & G. Salancik, & W. Astley (macro)
- •Base discipline Political science
- •Champions People who like power, politics, & conspiracy
- •Intended messages Promote
- •Realized messages Hoard (rather than share)
- •School category Descriptive
- •Associated homily *"Look out for number one."*

8. Cultural School
- •Sources E. Rhenman & R. Normann
- •Base discipline Anthropology
- •Champions People who like the social, the spiritual, & the collective
- •Intended messages Coalesce
- •Realized messages Perpetuate (rather than change)
- •School category Descriptive
- •Associated homily *"An apple never falls far from the tree."*

9. Environmental School
- •Sources M. Hannan & J. Freeman, Contingency theorists
- •Base discipline Biology
- •Champions Population ecologists, some organization theorists, & positivists in general
- •Intended messages React
- •Realized messages Capitulate (rather than confront)
- •School category Descriptive
- •Associated homily *"It all depends."*

10. Configuration School
- •Sources A. Chandler, H. Minzberg, D. Miller, & R. Miles & C. Snow
- •Base discipline History
- •Champions Lumpers & integrators in general, as well as change agents.
- •Intended messages Integrate, transform
- •Realized messages Lump (rather than split, adapt)
- •School category Descriptive & prescriptive
- •Associated homily *"To everything there is a season."*

These roles help to understand the basis of strategic thinking in organizations and HRD. They also help explain alternative visions of future states and approaches to positive change. For example, most HRD leaders would more comfortably fit in the "Learning School" compared to the "Entrepreneurial School."

Strategic Thinking in HRD

Torraco and Swanson (1996) discuss the theoretical issues surrounding the role of HRD in strategic organizational planning. They note two factors that have influenced the evolution of HRD toward a more active role as a key determinant of business strategy: the centrality of information technology to business success and the sustainable competitive advantage offered by workforce expertise.

These factors work together in such a way that the competitive advantages they offer are nearly impossible to achieve without developing and maintaining a highly competent workforce. They go on to build the case for HRD that is truly of strategic value to an organization is (1) performance-based; (2) demonstrates its strategic capability, and (3) is responsive to the emergent nature of strategy.

Strategic Roles of HRD

HRD is defined as a process for developing and/or unleashing human expertise for the purpose of improving performance at the organizational, work process, or individual contributor levels (Swanson, 1996). Furthermore, three strategic roles for HRD have been put forward by Torraco and Swanson (1995). These three HRD strategic roles used as the springboard of this inquiry are described as follows:

Performance-Based HRD HRD has a history of serving a wide range of organizational demands and interests from the personal development needs of individuals to organizational transformations involving everyone in the organization. When HRD addresses the personal interests of employees, it is most likely not being strategic. For HRD to offer real strategic value to the organization, it must contribute directly to important business goals and must be based on key business performance requirements (Swanson, 1996).

Demonstrating the Strategic Capability of HRD To fully demonstrate the strategic importance of HRD, it must be more than performance-based. HRD will only be perceived as having strategic value if it also demonstrates genuine *strategic capability*. As HRD demonstrates *strategic capability*, it earns respect and credibility as a full partner in forging the organization's future direction.

Strategic capability challenges HRD to contribute beyond interventions that support a given strategic initiative. *Strategic capability* is based on a HRD philosophy that reflects the value of human resources in the pursuit of long-range business goals and the conviction that people are the only organizational resource that can shape and recreate the ways in which all other business resources are used. HRD demonstrates its *strategic capability* to the organization's business planning process by: (a) providing education and learning in the concepts and methods of strategic organizational planning to those responsible for setting the strategic direction for the organization and (b) having HRD professionals directly participate in the strategic organizational planning process. Together these two features dramatically emphasize HRD's value to the business planning process and distinguish HRD as having *strategic capability*.

Emergent Strategy and HRD HRD traditionally has served a role supportive to strategy. HRD that primarily serves to support the execution of a given strategy fills an adjunctive role to strategy that is clearly more *deliberate* than *emergent*. Thus, a majority of the HRD effort purporting to be strategic provides the workforce with important expertise after the formulation and adoption of strategy by others. HRD cannot add value to the shaping of strategy if the strategy is already fully formulated.

If strategy is treated as both a deliberate and emergent phenomenon, the benefits of developing and using employee expertise to capitalize on evolving business opportunities can then be realized. The potential for HRD's strategic leverage must exist by treating strategic planning as an emergent process. Further prescriptions for advancing the strategic contributions of HRD are of little value if strategy is fully formulated and adopted without the performance perspectives that HRD offers.

Scenario Building and Strategic Planning

Parallel to the concept of traditional strategic planning is the idea of scenario building. Schwartz (1996) defines a scenario as, "A tool for ordering one's perceptions about the future environments in which decisions might be played out" p. 4). This tool is most often in the form of a story or plot lines which allows the organization members to fully explore a rich story of possible future events. These scenarios are stories describing the current and future states of the business environment and they become 'stories' about alternative possible futures (van der Heijden, 1996).

"Scenarios deal with two worlds: the world of facts and the world of perceptions. They explore for facts but they aim at perceptions inside the heads of decision-makers. Their purpose is to gather and transform information of strategic significance into fresh perceptions" (Wack, 1985a, p. 140). Used in this way, scenario planning presents "... an efficient approach to strategic business planning, focusing on business ideas in an uncertain world" (van der Heijden, 1996, p. 2). The problem is one of not knowing the fit between strategic planning and scenario building along with the role of HRD in shaping and supporting strategic organizational planning.

Miller, Lynham, Provo, and St. Claire (1997) have provided a useful overview of scenario building for the HRD profession. The following summary mirrors their analysis of the scenario building component of strategic organizational planning along with the traditional strategic planning component:

As more organizations face continuous change as the order of the day, organizational professionals have developed expertise and tools to operate successfully in such an environment. The traditional tools of strategic planning, which are commonly extrapolations of the past to determine the future, are not effective when future forces do not mirror past forces (Mintzberg, 1994). In an environment of constant change and challenge, non-traditional tools for anticipating and planning for change are needed. One such tool is scenario building.

A scenario is "a tool for ordering one's perceptions about alternative future environments in which decisions might be played out" (Schwartz, 1996, p. 4). The process of scenario planning generally involves development of several plots and supporting narratives that illustrate primary forces driving change within a system, their interrelationships, and uncertainties in the environment (Wack, 1985a). Scenarios help decision makers structure and think about uncertainty, test their assumptions about how critical driving forces will interact, and reorganize their mental model of reality (Wack, 1985b).

Scenario development is described as an art rather than a science (Schwartz, 1996). By providing safe and often engaging opportunities to explore the implications of uncertainty and to think through ways of responding to it, scenarios enable planners to deal more confidently in the midst of uncertainty (Schwartz, 1996; van der Heijden, 1995).

Van der Heijden (1996) characterizes the individual and organizational learning process of scenario building: by organizing complex information on future trends and possibilities into a series of plausible stories, scenarios are seen as interpretive tools that create meaning and thereby guide action. The use of multiple plausible futures helps decision-makers think more expansively about change and to adopt multiple perspectives for the purpose of understanding future events. In the end, scenarios offer entrepreneurial and protective benefits to organizations (Wack, 1985a).

The Centre for Innovative Leadership (van der Merwe, 1997) describes the scenario development process as follows:

1. Identification of a strategic organizational agenda (including assumptions and concerns a bout current strategic thinking and vision).
2. Challenging of existing assumptions of organizational decision-makers by questioning current mental models about the external environment.
3. Systematically examining the organization's external environment t o improve understanding of the structure of the key forces driving change.
4. Synthesis of information about possible future events into three or four alternative plots or story lines about possible futures.
5. Development of narratives around the story lines to make the stories relevant and compelling to decision-makers.
6. Use of the stories to help decision-makers "review" their strategic thinking.

Traditional *strategic planning* refers to the business planning and systems thinking required of those responsible for setting the strategic direction for the organization (Mintzberg, 1994). Presumably, those who participate in strategic planning possess the business acumen and understanding needed for meaningful contributions to long-term planning. However, strategic planning by itself requires a sophisticated array of conceptual, analytical, and interpersonal skills. Business planning involves strategic decisions that are frequently group decisions. Planners, therefore, need skills in problem definition, facilitating analysis by the group, resolving communication breakdowns, reaching consensus, and building commitment. Skills associated with strategic planning include environmental scanning, analyses of industries and competition, organizational analysis (e.g., "SWOTs"), competitive benchmarking, using systems frameworks to identify inconsistencies and threats to business development, and clarifying and articulating a unified organizational mission.

Together, *scenario building* and *strategic planning* are proposed as a holistic view of strategic organizational planning (SOP). Figure 1 graphically illustrates the SOP components and their relationships. The SOP "double funnel" graphically contrasts the roles and relationships between scenario building and strategic planning in the SOP process. Scenario building flares out the thinking in its expansiveness, and strategic planning reins in the thinking into an action plan. All the while, both SOP phases are operating in the complex environment and SOP is viewed as a continuing process. HRD engages in supporting and shaping the entire process.

Contributions of HRD to Strategic Organizational Planning

What, then, are the potential contributions of HRD to strategic organizational planning (SOP)? In order to explore this question a matrix of the three HRD strategic roles in context of the two SOP components, scenario building and strategic planning, is proposed in Table 1. It is important to highlight the definitions of scenario building as an expansive process and strategic planning as a reductionist process as being crucial to the exploration of the interpretation of HRD contributions to SOP.

Figure 3
Source: Swanson, Lynham, Ruona, & Provo, 1998, p. 591

The Strategic Organizational Planning Research Agenda facing the HRD Profession

The following research agenda is based on the contribution cells of the supporting and shaping of strategic organization planning matrix (Table 1). The three strategic roles of HRD are used as the major organizers of the proposed research agenda.

Performance-Based

1. From a *strategic planning* perspective, the profession needs to learn why HRD is not able to consistently provide a road map for developing and/or unleashing the human expertise required of an organization to achieve its strategic plan and is not able to consistently fulfilling its commitment to execute its related SP action plans.
2. From a *scenario building* perspective, the HRD profession needs to cull out valid tools for making critical judgments as to an organization's probability of being able to develop and/or unleash the human expertise required of the various scenarios.

Table 1
Human Resource Development's Contribution in Supporting and Shaping Strategic Organizational Planning

	STRATEGIC ORGANIZATIONAL PLANNING (SOP)	
HRD STRATEGIC ROLES	***SCENARIO BUILDING*** *Defined:* SB is a process for ordering perceptions about the future environments in which decisions might be played out (Schwartz, 1991, p. 4).	***STRATEGIC PLANNING*** *Defined:* SP is a process for developing a comprehensive statement of the organization's mission, objectives, and strategy
PERFORMANCE-BASED *Defined:* HRD must contribute directly to important business goals and must be based on key business performance requirements (Torraco & Swanson, 1995, p. 17).	*Contribution:* •HRD provides critical judgements as to the organization's probability of being able to develop and/or unleash the human expertise required of the various scenarios being proposed and what each would require.	*Contribution:* •HRD provides a road map for developing and/or unleashing the human expertise required to achieve the strategic plan and commitment to execute related SP action plans.
STRATEGIC CAPABILITY *Defined:* To demonstrate genuine strategic capability HRD (a) provides SOP education and learning, and (b) actively participates in the SOP process (Torraco & Swanson, 1995).	*Contribution:* •HRD oversees the SB education and learning required of personnel for building "shared, integrated mental models of multiple plausible futures" (Lynham, Provo & Ruona, 1998, p. 6). •HRD experts serve as contributors of key human resource information and value all information being considered during the SB process.	*Contribution:* •HRD oversees the SP education and learning required of personnel for planning strategy, including the analysis and synthesis of internal and external conditions. •HRD experts participate on the SP team and act as a catalyst to create new business based on the strategic development and/or unleashing of human expertise (Mintzberg, 1994).
EMERGENT STRATEGY *Defined:* HRD assumes a deliberate role in the emergent nature of SOP (Torraco & Swanson, 1995).	*Contribution:* •HRD creates and maintains "an institutional learning and memory system...and helps an organization avoid repeating mistakes" (Van der Heijden, 1996, p. 2.) within the realm of core expertise and new learning requirements. •HRD assumes itself critical to the ongoing strategic SB conversations of the organization. SB makes "discussing strategy a natural part of any [HRD] management task and not the exclusive domain of specialist" (Van der Heijden, 1996, p. 22).	*Contribution:* •HRD creates and maintains a system for ongoing learning (in the forms of internalization, comprehension, and synthesis) from its own SP effort. •HRD assumes itself critical in the catalytic information-sharing, strategic partnering, and strategy finding SP challenge facing its host organization. (see Mintzberg, 1994).

Source: Swanson, Lynham, Ruona, & Provo, 1998, p. 592

Strategic Capability

3. From a *strategic planning* perspective, the HRD profession needs to develop and validate a core strategy for overseeing the SP education and learning required of personnel for planning strategy (including the analysis and synthesis of internal and external conditions).
4. From a *strategic planning* perspective, the HRD profession needs to develop and validate a process (grounded in performance-based strategic contributions) for legitimizing their role as experts on the SP team in creating new business based on the strategic development and/or unleashing of human expertise.
5. From a *scenario building* perspective, the HRD profession needs to develop and validate a core strategy for overseeing the SB education and learning required of personnel for building shared, integrated mental models of multiple plausible futures.

6. From a *scenario building* perspective, the HRD profession needs to develop and validate a process (grounded in performance-based strategic contributions) for legitimizing their role as experts on the SB team in contributing key human resource information and valuing all information being considered during SB.

Emergent Strategy

7. From a *strategic planning* perspective, the HRD profession needs to develop and validate a system for creating and maintaining ongoing learning and systems thinking (in the forms of internalization, comprehension, and synthesis) from its own SP effort.
8. From a *strategic planning* perspective, the HRD profession needs to develop and validate a SP process of information-sharing, strategic partnering, and strategy finding critical to its host organization.
9. From a *scenario building* perspective, the HRD profession needs to develop and validate an institutional learning and memory system that helps an organization avoid repeating mistakes within the realm of core expertise and new learning requirements.
10. From a *scenario building* perspective, the HRD profession needs to develop and validate a process of engaging in ongoing strategic conversations of the organization from the HRD perspective.

Conclusion

HRD has been traditionally relied upon to serve in roles that are supportive of the strategies chosen to guide organizations. Although the supporting role of HRD is important for operational success in assuring the employee competence to meet present performance demands, HRD offers even greater strategic value as a major force in the shaping of business strategy. This strategic role will most likely be achieved through a purposeful connection of sound theory and practice-- the grist of Human Resource Development scholars around the world.

Note: The author wishes to acknowledge the contributions of Susan A. Lynham, Joanne Provo, Wendy E. Ruona, and Richard J. Torraco to this work.

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Shaping a Learning Vision: Life Histories of Learning Leaders and Facilitators

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This paper draws on life history interviews with learning organization facilitators to identify transforming events that shaped the learning visions of these key change agents. Interviews with organization developers and senior managers of organizations working to make learning a central driver of innovation and change were conducted. From these interviews, key lessons for facilitators and leaders of learning organizations were identified.

Keywords: Learning Organization, Life History, Qualitative Research

The learning organization is defined as an organization that has created an infrastructure to support continuous learning and knowledge creation. In this study, we use a model that defines the learning culture at the individual, team or group, organizational, and societal levels that is characterized by seven dimensions (Watkins and Marsick, 1993, 1996; Marsick and Watkins, 1999). From this theoretical framework, we have drawn implications for facilitators of learning organizations. What is less known is what learning the facilitators themselves bring to the task of designing learning organizations. The purpose of this study was to identify key attitudes, skills and knowledge of learning organization facilitators that evolve from critical life experiences. We asked: What life experiences do these people report as particularly influential in shaping their learning organization perspectives?

We adopted a constructivist perspective that suggests that people co-create meaning within lived experiences (Schwandt, 1990) to investigate the lived experience of learning organization facilitators. This was a qualitative study that drew on critical incident [Flanagan, 1954, Ellinger & Watkins, 1997] methodology for data collection. Convenience sampling of those individuals whose learning organization work we had followed for two or more years resulted in six interviews from four organizations. Interviews were conducted by the authors and by our two collaborators. We interviewed three senior managers and three organization developers. We drew on the biographical tradition in constructing these life history vignettes (Creswell, 1998). We used content analysis to develop themes from the interviews and to compare themes across the six cases (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

The Leaders: Jerry, Ralph, and Pete

In this paper, we draw on our interviews with three senior managers to peer into the paths that they took as leaders.

I cant work where I cant trust— Jerry Marlar, CEO, Sulzer Biologica (formerly of Sulzer Orthopedics)

Jerry Marlar grew up in Oak Ridge, Tennessee where his father was a blue collar worker, working on the cyclotron project. Jerry said, "But I grew up in the Oak Ridge community where there were lots of smart folks. Most of my teachers in high school were Ph.D's." But before his family moved to Oak Ridge, his early schooling experiences were quite different. "I went to school in a one room school house. First grade. My aunt was the teacher." Through his schooling experiences, Jerry saw a range of opportunities and resources. Yet, Jerry felt that his work experiences were equally significant. "I think probably now as I reflect, one of the other shaping events, I

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have worked all my life. When I was in first grade I was chopping cotton… . I've worked forever." Jerry described what happened when he switched to a business major in college.

> Well, I thought I'd gone to heaven. … It was creative, and you could think and use sixteen ways to get there, not just the roadway to get there. … I got out of school in Marketing and Sales Management, asked my professors who are the best organizations to go with to learn, because I had this thought that the first half of my career I would be in an environment where I'm learning. So I started to look around and said who are the best trainers, and I was told Johnson & Johnson was a great trainer.

Jerry was already thinking about his entire career, allotting half of it to jobs that would build a repertoire of skills for the second half. B., the owner of a small orthopedic manufacturing company, offered him a job which he turned down to take the job at J&J. B. later asked Jerry to be the head of Sales and Marketing for the whole company.

> And I'll never forget this, making the decision....I said, "I made a conscious decision that if I come to the right manufacturing [company], and if after five years I have failed, I will learn more in that than staying with J&J five years, in the normal [course of events]. And so I made the commitment that I was going to have an opportunity to learn a whole lot more a lot faster..

Six years later, Jerry went to the president and told him that the company had a lot of problems.

> I went in to B. one day and said, … , 'These are ten issues you're not dealing with and not getting it done. And they're not in my area of responsibility. I have a deal for you. I want you to make me your General Manager, give me six months to get these corrected or on the path to correction. At the end of six months if I haven't done it, you can fire me. If I have done it, I want my title changed to General Manager permanently, and I want you to double my salary.' He looked at me, he says, 'Well, I don't mind paying ten thousand a year, so what have I got to lose?' So he looked at me and he says, 'Okay, I'll do it.'… And he gave it to me. At the end of six months I had accomplished all but one, and one he had just said, 'No you can't do.' ...So I became the General Manager, and really started a learning curve then.

The small orthopedic company of which he was General Manager was sold to a much larger multi-national organization. Jerry was asked to go to run a company in France. He agreed to do so under six conditions, one of which was that he be given an option to return to Memphis when his work was done in France. Five years later, the President of the company called and asked him to come to headquarters. They could see that he was quite creative and entrepreneurial. Jerry reminded him of his six conditions. They argued about it for about a year and then Jerry made a difficult decision.

> And I answered the six fundamental questions we all ask in every relationship: Why am I here? How am I doing, really? Why are we here? How are we doing, really? Are you committed to excellence?and Can I trust you? I answered the first five very, very favorably, and supportive, and thankful. I said all the things you helped me grow in, and learn, and do, and the experiences I've had, etc. But when I got to 'Can I trust you?' I said, 'I can't work for a corporation where I cannot trust the CEO to follow through with his personal commitments.' I had no choice but to resign.

Luckily, a head hunter had been trying to get him to be President of what was then Intermedics Orthopedics Inc so he took the position. He had already made up his mind that he wanted to implement learning organization principles. In 1992, Jerry Marlar became the CEO of the company and three months later, one-half of the executive team walked out of IOI on one afternoon and started a competing company. Marlar recounts this experience.

> Three months after I had been there I was going to visit a customer in Dallas… . I got back to my room that night, Thursday night, had a phone call from the VP of sales. He says, 'Jerry, we got a problem.' I said, 'Great, what is it?' This is about 10:30, 11:00 at night. 'I've just found out that our VP of finance, the VP of R & D, the VP of marketing, the Director of Quality, the Director of Regulatory Affairs, the two key managers in this area [sales] and three engineers are all going to leave the company and go start a competing one with the former President.' I said, 'Okay, here's what we do. Call a meeting at 10 o'clock in the morning. I'll call the VP of Personnel … and tell her what the deal is. We'll do all the legal things right. And we'll bring them in and tell them that we appreciate the fact they're going to go start a new company, and we want to help them get started now. No problem. Let's round up your personal possessions and your belongings, and we'll pay you all the right severance pay, we'll do all the things we should do. And we'll escort them out. My wife and I are going to a retreat for the weekend. I will see you on Monday. We called it White Friday. We washed the slate clean and we started over. So now I knew I had a chance to build an organization and a team committed to the right things.

Marlar's clarity of vision about his own career also extended to a clarity of vision about where the organization had to go to be successful. Jerry attributes his personal faith experiences with providing him the confidence to set a course and head steadily toward it, even with turbulence. Marlar's life is a story that he more than fate is writing. His have been conscious, thoughtful choices, built on a foundation of faith in God, himself, and others; love of learning, a strong ethical core and explicit values, and a vision of a learning organization.

My role is to live it— Ralph Stayer, CEO, Johnsonville Sausage, Inc.

Growing up in Sheboygan, Wisconsin, the son of a successful owner of a small niche market sausage manufacturer, Ralph Stayer, Junior had a life course almost set for him from the cradle. When Ralph Stayer, Senior stepped down as President, he left behind a company with a small market but a solid reputation as the premier bratwurst maker in the region. His son built the organization into one that had an international reputation with substantial growth in market share. We wondered what early incidents led Ralph to walk this path. Linda Honold interviewed him and asked Ralph if he could think of anything in his childhood or his early adulthood that led to his perspective on leadership for a learning organization.

> No, there was none. That came from thinking it through… and a lot of reading. I have a basic observation on human beings. People really want to be great. I've been very good at, lucky, capable, or skilled, to take principles and to . . . connect them, and see how they might actually work in real life… I built a system where we all share in the profit. I incorporate everybody into this thing, then all of the sudden the problems aren't mine anymore. They belong to everyone. The first thing you need to look at is everybody wants to succeed. The second one is who owns the problem. As long as the problem rests with leadership, nobody else owns it. You need to build a system where you say I think you want to do a great job. I believe in you. I trust you. Let's define what a great job is. We work together and over a period of time ...we actually change the values in the company. But we didn't go to change the values, we went to create the values of — we work together, we trust each other — and then that became the norm. A good Catholic education brought me up to believe that other people are good people. I believe others are brought up the same way.

Like Marlar, Stayer built his vision on core values and principles that he also sees as connected to his faith. There is a strong sense in Stayer's perspective that the learning organization must be a collective journey. Linda described him as a risk taker and asked him where this came from.

> Part of my make-up comes from my parents. I'm the kid that figured out how to crawl out of his crib at a year-and-a-half. Well, they put chicken wire on top of my crib and everything in order to keep me in. When I was three I took a screw driver and my parents were gone for awhile and I took all the chairs apart. You know, those old chrome chairs with the plastic cushions. I had all the backs off and all the pieces laying on the floor. I was working on the table when my parents came in. Anyway, if your vision, your sense of what you want to accomplish, if your reason exceeds your needs, your concern about failure or your need for approval, you'll be a risk taker, period.

Linda asked Ralph to say how he saw his role.

> First of all my role, it's leadership. It's taking us to the next place. It's not managing what we've got. [It's] getting where we need to be. Visualizing it. That's the role I've created for myself … At the top the leadership is in perceiving the vision, listening, and getting people organized around it. How can I measure it? How can I touch it? I can feel it, how can I see it from my perspective because they all see differently?
>
> Execution is where all the excellence lies. After leadership the next thing is to stay with it. Stay with it. Work it. Go work it myself with a small group of people. Work it myself and make it work. You're right there. No broad proposals that I hand off, right down to the nitty gritty. As the leader that's one of my big jobs. And I did that back in the early 80s. I sat down with vice presidents. We went week after week after week after week, asking 'What are we doing? What are we doing? How's it working?' Working it, working it, working it, working it. It was continually asking, continually contributing my insights because I see stuff that most people don't see. That was the first team. We worked through it. What about? What about? What about? What about? With me as a catalyst. Me working with them, me right there with them, but them as owning and doing. It's always my job as the leader of this company to know what we want to get done. If I don't do that, I'm not doing my job.

My role is to live it. It's to embody it. To get anybody to believe in it, I've got to embody it myself the best I can. Show that I'm willing to do it. That's part of my leadership. Exhibit the fact that you're living it. Exhibit the fact that you care about people. Care about other people's success. I can't talk about success here unless people believe that I care about their success, that I want them to succeed. And I think that pretty much people think that I want them to succeed. That I'm interested in them and I'm proud of them and I'm happy for them when they succeed.

Whether his willingness to take risks came from early conditioning or a natural precocity is hard to say, but it would appear that the most important factor is an inner vision of what he wanted to accomplish. This vision also permeates his understanding of his leadership role. His is a personal vision, and one that is at the lived level, hands on, with sleeves rolled up, working side by side with the people who will enact the vision. Stayer emphasizes the persistence and conviction that people can succeed that are necessary to make this work. His insight that people need to understand and come to their own meaning of the vision is critical. Without this perspective, it would be easier to simply command that people enact his vision.

The ultimate vision: Business results-- Pete Cistaro, Vice-President of Distribution, PSE&G

Judy ONeil interviewed Pete Cistaro and asked him to tell how he came to his current role as a leader of a learning organization. Pete has worked his whole career at PSE&G. Although educated as an engineer, his interest from the beginning was to work with people. Like Marlar, he made choices about the direction of his career. His early experience with the company taught him lessons about the best way to work with people.

Actually this is my thirtieth year with PSE&G. So I started here right out of school. I have an engineering degree. I knew when I went to engineering school that I really did not want to be an engineer... One of the things that drew me to this company was the fact that they offered more of a managerial training program. ... you'd be placed into a management role relatively early on in your career. ...

In 1972 I was promoted to....District Superintendent, which is equivalent to an Area Manager today. And I wasn't even twenty-six. ... you've got to see yourself as a 26-year-old person dealing with people who were in their forties, fifties ...here you are the young kid telling these other people what to do. And that's why I guess I learned rather quickly that I wasn't going to tell them what to do... but I was going to try to get from them their experience, their capabilities, and sort of get them to use it better, and work harder, and work together to make that happen.

Pete saw the importance of working together, empowering people, achieving success together— rather than the command and control hierarchy common in the company. This learning repeated itself time and time again.

Then I was asked to ... head up the Labor Relations on the electric side of the business, which was a completely different thing for me. In fact, when I was asked to do that my immediate reaction was 'I don't know anything about the electric side of the business. How can I sit there and be the spokesperson and deal across the table?' And the answer was 'well you know enough about the agreement, you know enough about people, you handle yourself to the point where we believe that people have some trust and confidence in your capabilities, and don't worry about the technical stuff. That'll handle itself.' So, again, I think this effort of 'I don't know all the details. I'm not the expert here, so I need to rely upon other people to help me to get my job done' comes out again. ...

In addition to leading through working with others, Pete has other explicit views of his leadership role. These views are similar to other learning organization leaders-— a focus on vision, the means to transmit that vision, and ways to achieve that vision.

I think a good leader has to first of all have a vision of what they see and where they want to bring the organization. I don't think that the organization can do that necessarily by a vote, or by some referendum, or by multiple choice tests. I think there needs to be some vision, and then that vision needs to be articulated so that you can get more and more people engaged to a) understand it, b) recognize that it's the right thing to do, and c) that they want to support it.

Probably one of the key phrases for Pete as he talks about his leadership role is 'the ultimate vision, which is the business results." Pete believes you can achieve the right results through coaching but you can actually get in the way of the right results with behavior that is more directive. Cistaro also underscores a focus on people.

The Facilitators: Linda, Renee, and Bill

We also interviewed three individuals who were organization developers. We asked each of them to share with us incidents in their lives that they thought were critical in shaping their current thinking about how to create learning organizations.

We've only just begun-- *Linda Honold, formerly with Johnsonville Sausage, Inc.*

Sitting in Linda Honold's apartment overlooking the lake in Milwaukee, she talked about how she came to value learning. It really began at the age of 10 when a ruptured appendix had her flat on her back for three weeks during which she read constantly. Her mother encouraged her to read. She deeply valued education and instilled in Linda a thirst for learning. But most significant to Linda's work at Johnsonville was probably what happened later when she was in high school:

> When I was in the 9th grade, friends of mine broke into a house and stole some collectible guns. They were going to run away. I skipped school to talk them out of it and got caught and was given detention for missing two periods. I told my mother that I did not want to go to a school where you were given detention for helping your friends. Sister Mary Jo Donaldson of St. Bede's Priory had a vision of a school based on Summerhill. My mother had heard of it and so I investigated it and transferred to this private Catholic high school in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. This is how I ended up in a self-managed learning high school. At this school, I had to contract with a faculty member for what I would do. Each person had a mentor. You could be creative. I created a one-on-one course with Sister Mary Jo on Russian History and Russian Literature.

In many ways St. Bede's Priory was a visible model of how self-directed learning and empowerment could work. Later, after receiving her undergraduate degree, Linda worked for a printing company. She hated going to work every morning. Everyone else hated it too. She decided that there was something morally wrong with people spending one fourth of their time doing something that they hated to do. This led her to enroll in graduate school where she had several labor relations courses. Training in Industrial Relations inspired a decision to work from within an organization to make change.

Linda answered an ad for a Personal Development Coordinator in a project sponsored by the Joint Training Partnership Act that led to another significant learning experience. "The job was to work among Hmong refugees. I helped them get basic job skills, advocated for them with employers, then provided job support once they were employed." The job with refugees involved working with the whole person and seeing that, despite great disadvantage, these individuals could find and maintain employment with appropriate help. Later, at Johnsonville, Linda saw parallels in the lives of some employees who had stopped learning after they left grade school. Linda saw that opportunity and support could turn this around.

When Linda first applied to work at Johnsonville Foods, they hired another person. When this person left on maternity leave, Linda called Johnsonville Foods and inquired into the position:

> I called and said that I was still interested. The job I was eventually hired to do was defined as to get people in a learning mode. This sounded fun, creative, and exactly what I ought to do at this point in my life. I started educating myself on what this meant. I read the traditional learning literature. I ... decided that it did not fit. Then I read the career development literature and felt that this fit, but not rigidly. The key was making people responsible for their own development. I saw my job as creating opportunities and systems for them to learn. No one had the right to play God.

After five years working inside Johnsonville, Linda left Johnsonville to form her own consulting business. She continued to work as a consultant to Johnsonville as well. Linda said, "John Stuart Mill said that learning and change are somewhat synonymous. Get them learning, they will be more open to change." Linda's life history is clearly that of a person who has sought opportunities to learn and to change.

More will always be revealed---*Renee Rogers, Director of Human Resources, Sulzer Orthopedics, Inc.*

Renee Rogers of Sulzer Orthopedics, Inc., describes the incidents that she felt most significantly shaped her perspective. Renee recalled an experience from the 14 months she spent traveling in India in the late 1970's.

> While I was in Calcutta, I stayed in the Salvation Army hostel. Each evening the rickshaw wallahs would park their rickshaws in a circle and all their families would form a temporary village. One night when we came back to the hostel, the rickshaw families were having a grand celebration. I still remember a baby

sitting in a window sill, laughing outloud with her eyes shining. Since this was not usual, we asked someone on the street what was happening and they explained that one of the rickshaw wallahs had been given some chicken feet and the families were happily preparing a feast for that evening's supper. I left this scene and went into a three-week depression.

Renee was disoriented by the discrepancy between her view of life and theirs. She began to develop a nonjudgmental perspective of the "other." Renee reflected:

> Gradually, as many people do who stay in India long enough, I began to integrate this experience. I developed a deep sense of acceptance and an understanding that my judgments, good or bad, were inevitably rooted in my own experience. I began to understand that it didn't work for me to judge the quality of others happiness or pain. In fact during those three weeks, I was the one who was unhappy, not the child whose eyes I still remember. I often think of this experience in my corporate life today. I think how often people in organizations judge events and situations in light of their own experience; how there really are people who make $100,000+ a year and still feel underpaid and undervalued; how life satisfaction and quality of experience is a relative phenomenon that I'm better off not judging — only observing.

Renee's experiences continued to broaden her understanding of people and systems. When she was in graduate school, she did an internship with American Airlines in 1985. She worked as a curriculum specialist with a Vice President on a new five-week international security training program. It was piloted with 10 Security Managers in Frankfurt, Germany. Renee attended the course, took notes, and translated it into training materials and a train-the-trainer program so that they could implement it internally. Renee describes her interaction with the consulting group, and the insights she gained into what is involved in large-scale change:

> The consultants who delivered the training were career Israeli El Al security employees who sometimes had problems with delivering the course in English. Because of my ESL background, I began working regularly with the consultants preparing for the classes each day. Because this was the first major contract for them, they really were designing the program as they went along. In fact, the consultants had deep knowledge of their subject, but I learned that not all high-powered consultants have their interventions all planned out in advance. . . . they were good at co-designing with the client, adapting their expert knowledge to the particular situation of the client. This was also my first experience to support a large-scale, strategic program . . . so I was able to see the process as it unfolded.

Renee felt that she was not only learning what she had been trained to do, but also how to adapt it to fit the circumstances and the exigencies of a particular situation. She was also working with increasingly larger systems.

Renee's first OD job was with a municipal public utility, where the roles of employee relations and OD were intertwined. She later responded to an advertisement for a position at Intermedics Orthopedics and was hired. Renee found her first assignment there to be a critical learning experience. She explains:

> My first assignment at IOI was to develop and implement a team training course for newly formed cross-functional product teams. I did this in the first year and implemented the training with 80+ technical/professional employees. By the second training, we had worked out all the bugs so the training was well received. However, what the training uncovered were numerous, significant system problems that prevented employees from applying the team skills being taught. The young organization lacked defined systems and processes for cross-functional product development and management. However, this was more than we were able to address in any meaningful way with a training intervention. So I reframed the work as organizational diagnosis where we were able to document many problems but were not able to solve them immediately.

The progression in this incident is worth noting. In the beginning, the assignment was to develop a course. By thinking more systemically and incorporating the knowledge she was gaining from employees in trying to implement the course, she was able to transform the assignment into an organizational diagnosis. But she was also not in a position to take action on what she had learned. Rather, the eight supervisors were. By later involving them in teaching courses, they were able to see for themselves that at least one significant barrier to implementing these team and quality concepts was the fact that workers lacked certain basic literacy skills. With their support, Renee was able to move from teaching a course on teaming to an organization-wide basic skills intervention.

When Renee had been at IOI for one year, Jerry Marlar, the new President, transformed her role from training to Organization Development. He was initiating a company-wide visioning process and named her the internal point person in this endeavor. In this role she participated in the many sessions conducted at all levels of the organization, from the initial meetings with the executives, to the session with middle managers and then the

joint total management meeting, and finally all the sessions with employees. Most recently, Renee has been promoted to Vice President of Human Resources. Her life history well illustrates the way in which working with increasingly larger systems helps a facilitator develop the skills needed for the whole systems change of creating a learning organization.

Ask me anything. Ill tell you a story ***Gardner, Director of Corporate Learning and Organization Development, Advanced Micro Devices***

Advanced Micro Devices are making strides in the direction of becoming a learning organization. One key figure in this work is the Director of Corporate Learning and Organization Development, Bill Gardner. We asked Bill to think back on his life, from early family experiences to more recent experiences to identify those that had the most significant impact on how he now thinks about his role as a facilitator of learning organizations. He did not find it easy to come up with a single incident. He spoke instead of the cumulative impact of growing up as an invisible minority. He sees this as central to his current role as a support staff. This enables him to raise questions from a position of being both on the inside and the outside at the same time. Bill explains:

> I think back to a time when, ... I must have been maybe eleven or twelve. My father was an outstanding cook. . . my family or groups of people would get together at our house, and my father would cook these incredible things out in the yard... . And typically the men would stand around outside and, even though liquor was not legal in Mississippi, they'd usually have a few drinks, and the women would all be inside making potato salad, or something. And the children were sort of relegated to no person's land... But there was this real desire in all of the boys in the family to be accepted into that circle, standing outside around the barbecue pit laughing and talking about whatever they were talking about.
>
> And I vividly remember the first time that I was not run out of that ring. We had this lit tle apartment behind our house, and that's where they would go and mix these cocktails, or whatever. And we would walk in and they would order us out. But I remember the time that I got to stay. And so I was kind of overwhelmed with I'm now accepted in this circle. I am a man. I probably didn't say that in my head, but I remember intensely the feelings of they're not running me out. ... I may have combined a whole lot of incidents together, but I think the very first time that I was in there they were talking about a friend of my older sister's who was queer. And they were laughing about it and everything. And I had this distinct, sort of schizophrenic feeling that I can be here, and I can be accepted here, but I'm not really. So I have to pay attention. I have to be hyper-vigilant here to not let them know that I'm not one of them or I won't be able to be in here. But, maybe, there's something I could do to get them to look at things differently. The truth, I guess, as I knew it.

Bill struggled with wanting to stand up for his sister's friend because he knew something of what she might be feeling. But he also wanted to stay in the circle and be accepted. Bill related these feelings to situations in which he finds himself in the company where he has to be able to take both sides of an issue:

> And I think about that a lot, because I have that feeling often when... ..the people that I work with, I'm never a part of them. You know? They are either senior management, or executives, or something. So part of my role there is to not keep reminding them that I'm not one of them, but to help them get comfortable enough with me so that when I call up representing whoever it is I'm representing, be it the employees or just somebody who's not an executive, that they can hear that and not discount it like they discounted it other times. With this values work that I've been doing several times I've said, ' Okay. I'd like to sit down here for just a minute and take my facilitator cap off and speak to you as an employee of the company. But also as an employee of the company who did focus groups, and who saw the data from focus groups. Everyone in this room is a Director or a Vice-President, except for me. And you seem to keep forgetting that when we did focus groups, the focus groups that were done of Directors and VP agreed with what you're saying right now, but the employees didn't. And you keep speaking as an employee of the company, which you are, but you're not representative of the vast majority of employees.' And they'll hear that, and they saw the data just like I saw it. ...
>
> I've thought a lot that if I were not gay, I wouldn't be near as effective as I am in corporate America. You know, which is just a complete contradiction, even as I say it, but I wouldn't be. I mean, well certainly all the diversity stuff that I've done, but even separate and apart from that, all the other stuff is always having my head sort of in two places.

Like Renee, Bill draws power from having a different perspective, being able to see things that others do not. His experience of cultural separateness made it possible for him to both see from within the circle and without. This stance, somewhat like that of an anthropologist viewing oneself and one's organization almost as an alien culture, enables the learning organization facilitator to see what others see while being able to gently help those inside the organization see it too by speaking in their dialect.

A final characteristic of Bill's is his storytelling ability. Through stories, he is able to c apture attention and direct change more subtly. Bill was surprised at the ease with which he tells stories, and the value that these stories have in helping people to make sense of things. With all of the different change initiatives going on, Bill had to switch back and forth frequently between five or six different projects in any given day. Stories carried the thread between meetings that might take place months apart. Bill used stories to bring himself and others up-to-date:

> And when I would come into a meeting I seemed to be the only person that remembered what happened the time before. ... And so I'd draw pictures all during the meeting. I'd draw little icons to capture what's going on, and write little notes down. And I can pick out a couple of pages and look at it and I remember what's happened. But I found myself more and more going in to start off a meeting on some task force, and I'd say, Okay. Now, let's review what's happened up until this point.'... I just tell a story. ... And it helps now and then to get the thread and go from there, instead of having to go back and reconnect.
>
> So now we're starting to draw . . . like do the icons, do a little road map. And I usually come in and put the road map up, and people just kind of look at it. I mean, I have one that I can do in, I think, thirteen minutes. Thirteen minutes for the entire two and a half years of the vision, mission, and values process. . . . The little file cabinet exploding with twenty-five archival analyses. But are there critical incidents that I could identify with me telling stories? Heavens no! My whole life, say anything, I'll tell you a story about it.

Bill's stories capture the organizational memory — and he also triggers memories with personal images and icons. As his family did before him at Christmas, he carries on the organizational change tradition through his stories.

Implications for Leaders and Facilitators of Learning Organizations

We have seen that those who facilitate these initiatives often have a vision of the future that stands against the status quo. Leaders are pivotal to translating learning into organizational results, while learning organization facilitators are pivotal to architecting the structures that will enable learning to occur. Leaders of learning organizations must transition from old notions of leadership to new roles, and bring a long term vision of what the organization might be coupled with dogged persistence to work with people to understand and to bring about that vision. These leaders also show that a force of character, a personality that is organized and driven by values is essential. Facilitators and leaders have a clear vision of themselves and how they want to work within the system. They like to see people grow and develop, so that they too can speak their vision for themselves. They are system thinkers who see themselves as part of a large, complex, interactive universe. They carry a sense of the organizational memory---and of the importance of embedding knowledge to stablilize a change effort. They recognize that meaning is constructed –more by what we do than what we say

From a theoretical perspective, the life histories of individuals help us identify critical experiences that shape a learning organization philosophy and perspective. While we cannot prescribe a life experience, we can help others draw meaning from their experiences and understand how these experiences frame how they now view learning and change. The critical connection between experience and visions— both enabling and limiting visions— is underscored in these stories.

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